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3400 Forest Insect and Disease Management January 31, 1980

Functional Assistant Trip to the Hood River Ranger District, Mt. Hood NF

Forest Supervisor, Mt. Hood NF

On January 23, Gregory M. Filip, Pathologist from the Regional Office, visited the Hood River Ranger District, Mt. Hood National Forest. Purpose of the visit was to examine hazard trees and discuss vegetation management in the Hood Meadows Ski Area, specifically in the vicinity of ski lifts and terminals. He was accompanied by Jim Olsen and Jim Pollock, Recreation Staff from the Regional Office; and Paul Mansur, Resource Assistant and Ken Davis, Snow Ranger, both from the District.

They examined trees adjacent to several ski lifts but were interested especially in trees surrounding the base terminal of the Hood River Meadows chair lift. Several large and potentially destructive Engelmann spruce were within striking distance of the terminal. Three were dead or nearly so. One extremely large and healthy-appearing spruce had a slight lean toward the terminal.

All of the spruce trees in question serve as a visual barrier between Hood River Meadows (popular visitation site for cross-country skiers) and the base terminal of the ski lift. Removal of all the spruce in question would alter this visual barrier, and hence some of the aesthetic appeal of the Meadows. If only the dead or dying spruce are removed, smaller trees would remain to serve as a smaller visual screen. It was suggested that the dying trees be topped to reduce likelihood of falling and striking the lift and still form a partial visual screen. It was recommended that the extremely large and leaning spruce be left since the lean was long term--the terminal had straightened itself several years ago--and thus the potential hazard was less than if the tree only recently started to lean. Also, because of its size and position, the tree acted as an effective visual screen between the Meadows and the lift terminal.

A few potentially hazardous trees existed along the Hood River Meadows Lift, but because of the relative abundance of healthy-appearing trees of all size-classes along the lift, removal of the few potentially hazardous trees would not alter the character of the stand. Along the Daisy Chair Lift, however, removal of potentially hazardous trees adjacent to the lift would seriously alter the stand character. Unlike the stand adjacent to the Hood Meadows Lift, the stand along the Daisy Lift is primarily one size-class - large, old-growth hemlock and true fir. Also, the Daisy Lift has a history of repeated tree failures. Numerous trees are infected by the decay fungus, *Fomes pini*. Several options were considered to reduce hazard along the Daisy Lift and develop the character of stand as it exists along the Hood River Meadows Lift. In the future, this would reduce hazard from decadent trees and also retain the character of the stand if hazard trees were removed.

In order to formulate alternatives for sites with hazardous trees, it is recommended that intensive evaluations be conducted to determine (1) the number and location of trees which pose serious hazards to permanent structures if the trees fell and (2) the number and location of healthy trees in relation to hazardous trees in order to determine the character of the residual stand following treatment. Trees with root rots and/or extensive stem decays should be examined and treated. Root rots seriously reduce tree anchorage and thus wind firmness. Extensive stem decays weaken boles and lead to breakage. It is recommended that any intensive evaluation be conducted when snow has melted completely in order to detect root rots.

District personnel expressed an interest in obtaining information concerning hazard tree recognition and reduction in recreational areas as well as assistance from FIDM pathologists in marking potentially hazardous trees. Forest Insect and Disease Management staff will assist the District and Forest in any way possible concerning recognition and management of hazard trees in developed recreational areas.

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